

LEMONY SNICKET

"Who Could That Be at This Hour?"

Curriculum connections

- ❖ Autobiography
- ❖ Detective Stories
- ❖ Loyalty and Courage

Ages 9 & up

Written by
Lemony Snicket

ART BY SETH



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- At the beginning of Chapter One, Lemony Snicket states, “There was a town, and there was a girl, and there was a theft.” In your opinion, how does this opening set the stage for the events to come? Based on this introduction, what do you predict will be the most challenging obstacle Lemony Snicket will have to face? Why?



- Do you think it's possible to ask all the wrong questions? Have you ever been in a situation where you've done so? What was the result? What can be beneficial about asking even the wrong questions?
- Describe Lemony Snicket. What makes him a dynamic character? Is he the type of person you would want to befriend? Why or why not?
- While beginning to describe the Hemlock Tearoom and Stationery Shop, Lemony Snicket calls it “the sort of place where the floors always feel dirty, even when they are clean.” Consider the vivid description he offers of the shop; what are your favorite images?
- Consider the novel's cover art. In what ways are the images represented symbolic for the events that transpire throughout the course of the book?
- S. Theodora Markson tells Lemony Snicket, “Then know this: I am not your friend. I am not your teacher. I am not a parent or a guardian or anyone who will take care of you. I am your chaperone, and you are my apprentice, a word which here means ‘person who works under me and does absolutely everything I tell him to do.’” Do you agree with Theodora's description of what an apprentice should do? Why or why not?
- What is your earliest impression of Moxie? Do you find her to be a trustworthy friend to Lemony? Using examples from the text, support your position.
- Consider the town of Stain'd-by-the-Sea. Lemony describes it as an “unpeopled place” where “now the whole place had faded to gray.” What do you believe happened to the town to turn it from a vibrant place to its current state? What could be done to try to save a town like Stain'd-by-the-Sea?
- Describe S. Theodora Markson. Do you find her to be an appropriate chaperone to Lemony Snicket? Why or why not? Are there any ways that she and Lemony Snicket are similar? How are they different?
- Consider the variety of settings for *Who Could That Be at This Hour?*; name the three places you believe to be most important to the story. Using textual evidence from the book, explain why you find them to be significant to the overall story structure.
- Consider the unusual cast of secondary characters. Who are your favorite or least favorite residents in Stain'd-by-the-Sea and why?
- Explain the significance of the title, *Who Could That Be at This Hour?*. In your opinion, does it accurately describe the events and relationships portrayed in the novel?
- When describing the statue of the Bombinating Beast, Moxie calls it an “old gimcrack” yet much time and energy are spent both protecting and procuring it. What do you believe the great mystery is? Offer your predictions as to why Hangfire wants it so badly.

- *Who Could That Be at This Hour?* is told in first person by Lemony Snicket. How would the story be different if a different character were telling it? Do you think changing the point of view would make the story better or worse? Why?
- After dropping by for a visit, Hector, Lemony Snicket's associate, tells him, "You can't let her do this alone...she's not just your associate, Snicket. She's your sister." What type of obligation do you believe Lemony has left behind so that he can solve the mystery in Stain'd-by-the-Sea? Do you think he's right to continue to pursue Hangfire and help Ellington? Why or why not?
- Prosper Lost tells Lemony, "Everybody does something wrong at one time or another." Though Lemony knows this is true, it still makes him unhappy. Consider a time where you did something wrong. What were the consequences of your actions? Did you learn a lesson from your mistake? If so, did the lesson learned make the experience worthwhile?
- Using the phrase "This is a story about...", supply five words to describe *Who Could That Be at This Hour?*. Explain your choices.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Exploring *Who Could That Be at This Hour?* through Writing

- Many of the characters in *Who Could That Be at This Hour?* are not as they appear. Consider the importance of appearances and the need for disguising one's self—what might be a rationale to do so? What are the ramifications and consequences of such a choice? Select one character from the novel and write a short analysis of his/her choice to use a disguise.

- Lemony Snicket is dedicated to solving the mystery of the Bombinating Beast, helping Ellington Feint find her father (despite her lack of disclosure), and learning the true motivation of Hangfire. Consider Ellington's choices; do you agree with her actions? Why or why not? Using examples from *Who Could That Be at This Hour?*, write a persuasive essay detailing the reasons you feel she is or is not justified in doing what she does in pursuit of her father.
- Making thematic connections, consider the following themes of *Who Could That Be at This Hour?*: ingenuity, loyalty, courage, and perseverance. Select one of the themes and find examples from the book that helps support this theme. Create a sample Life Lesson Chart using the model at: http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson826/chart.pdf

Making Meaning by Exploring the Story's Setting

In *Who Could That Be at This Hour?*, the story's mysterious elements help set the stage for the characters as the action unfolds. Offer students the opportunity to explore the integral role the novel's diverse settings play in the book by completing one of the following:

- Consider the detailed description of the machine in the Black Cat Coffee shop. Using the description provided in the book as guidance, design and illustrate your own machine for a different purpose. Include the three buttons that trigger and automatic function.
- The Stain'd-by-the-Sea library plays an important role in *Who Could That Be at This Hour?* as it serves as both a haven for Lemony and a way to stay connected to his past. If you could create a perfect library, what would it look like? Design your dream library, making sure to include special book



collections that you'd acquire, floor plans, furniture examples, programs, etc. Using a space-planning program, develop a digital blueprint of your space, and remember that no significant space goes without a special name—don't forget to add a memorable moniker.

Considering Character

- After reading *Who Could That Be at This Hour?* as a class, students will brainstorm "crimes" committed by characters from the novel. Have groups of students work together to act as the prosecution or defense for the selected characters, while also acting as the jury for other groups. Students will use several sources to research their cases, including the novel and internet resources on judicial proceedings and roles of the members of a trial. All the while, students will be writing a persuasive piece to complement their trial work. Additional teaching resources for literary mock trials can be found at www.readwritethink.org
- Select a favorite character from *Who Could That Be at This Hour?* and create a character analysis T-shirt. Identify the literary elements used by the author to describe the character, and then create a visual representation of the character traits. The front of the shirt must include the book title, author's name, and the character's name, picture and description. The right sleeve must list the character's strength and the left sleeve should list the character's weaknesses. List internal and external conflicts, figurative language, and the story's climax on the back of the T-shirt.
- Working with others, create a character trait silhouette about your favorite or least favorite character in *Who Could That Be at This Hour?*. Begin by tracing an appropriately sized member of the group onto butcher paper. The silhouette must be "life size." The traced silhouette should reflect physical traits of the character, so modify

as you draw. Next, cut out the silhouette and include 10 values from your list. These need to be the most important traits of your character. For each trait, a quote that supports the description needs to be included. Inside the silhouette, include symbols which represent your character's interests, personality, beliefs, skills, or profession.

Create Original *Who Could That Be at This Hour?* Inspired Art

- Music is often used to connect people to each other and the world at large. Select a favorite character from *Who Could That Be at This Hour?* and create a CD with an original playlist which is representative of the experiences that character undergoes throughout the novel. Create original art for the jewel case and on the interior, and after including appropriate artist information, offer an explanation for the selection of each song.
- Using a variety of mediums, create an original piece of art which is symbolic of one of the major themes of *Who Could That Be at This Hour?*.
- One of Lemony Snicket's greatest strengths as a writer is his ability to offer richly descriptive scenes. In small groups, have students select a favorite scene from *Who Could That Be at This Hour?* and create either a digitally or manually illustrated graphic novel for that scene. Using a digital comic strip creator (<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/> or <http://infinitecomic.com/>), have students begin by using the strips to create storyboards for their scene. Have students select original art, images, and graphics. Alternatively, students could assume the personality and voices of two characters, and interact with one another by creating an extension of a scene from one of the novels. As part of the evaluation component, consider panel size and number of panels, transitions and layouts, artwork, writing, and lettering.



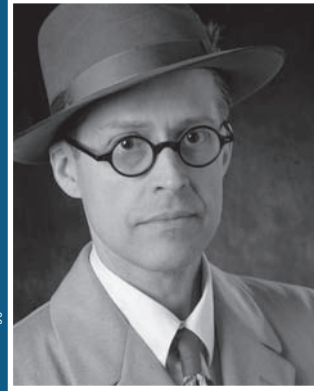
about the author



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Lemony Snicket had an unusual education and a perplexing youth and now endures a despondent adulthood. His previous accounts and research have been collected and published as books, including those in *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, *13 Words*, and *The Composer is Dead*. Visit him at www.LemonySnicketLibrary.com.

about the illustrator



© David Briggs

Seth is no stranger to a town that is fading. He is a multi-award-winning cartoonist, author, and artist, whose works include *Palookaville*, *Clyde Fans*, and *The Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists*. He lives in Guelph, Canada. His two-color illustrations will appear throughout the All the Wrong Questions series.



about the book



LEMONY SNICKET
"WHO COULD THAT BE AT THIS HOUR?"
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In a fading town, far from anyone he knew or trusted, a young Lemony Snicket began his apprenticeship in an organization nobody knows about. He began asking questions that shouldn't have been on his mind. Now he has written an account that should not have been published, in four volumes that shouldn't be read. This guide is about the first volume.

This guide was created by Rose Brock, a teacher, school librarian, and doctoral candidate at Texas Woman's University, specializing in children's and young adult literature.

